

Synod Council Retreat Talking Points
March 8-10, 2018
Camp Kuriakos, Sylvan Lake



Synod Council's spring retreat was held at beautiful, snowy, Camp Kuriakos on the west end of Sylvan Lake. Guests at the retreat included National Bishop Susan Johnson, National Church Council Representative Les Pearson, Anglican Observer the Venerable Alan Perry, and Area Deans: Reverends Jeff Decelle and Kevin Powell.

Rev. Janice Whitelock, Spirit of Grace, Brooks, served as our retreat chaplain. She led Dwelling in the Word and presided at the Eucharist each morning, and lead Holden Evening Prayer each evening. Cathy Kochendorfer provided delicious and nutritious meals. A time for fellowship and games was scheduled each evening as well.

Area Deans met with Bishop Larry beginning on Thursday afternoon and focused their attention on the continuing development of the area leadership teams, fall area gatherings and their work as the Nominating Committee for our upcoming convention.

The Bishop's Review Committee had completed the annual Bishop's review and met with the Bishop Thursday evening to review the results. A good number of responses were received this year. All the results were overwhelming positive for the work of Bishop Larry and his leadership of the Synod.

National Bishop Susan provided many updates; among them were the following:

- March 9 was Day 129 on the Reformation calendar (number of days since Oct 31); the focus that event provided to our Lutheran identity is still very evident
- Latest numbers for the Reformation challenge: 548 refugee sponsorships, 206 scholarships for ELCJHL Schools, 97,500 trees planted, and \$159,000 dollars for the LWF Endowment Fund.
- NCC has outlined a new strategic work plan; the four pillars are:
 - Courageous Innovation
 - Reconciled Relationships
 - One Body Working Together
 - Empowered Disciples
- The next ELCIC national convention will be held in Regina, July 11-13, 2019 under the theme: *Called to Journey Together: The Ministry of Reconciliation*. Bishop Susan also highlighted the National Worship Gathering to be held in Victoria in July and the CLAY gathering to be held in Thunder Bay in August.
- The Inclusive Language Document has been updated with more inviting language.
- A new MOU has been signed with CLWR; Bob Granke has retired after serving as Executive Director for 12 years. The new Executive Director Designate is Dr. Karin Achtelstetter.

- The Faith Order and Doctrine Committee has produced a new document: *Public Ministry in the ELCIC* which is based on our understanding of the ministry of the baptized. Congregations are invited to study and respond to this document. It NCC's hope that this focus will make our church more nimble and able to address our current landscape.
- Congregations still have time to study and respond to the Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) document.
- Guidelines have been developed for Authorized Lay Ministry.
- A job description was approved for delegates to National Conventions.
- The Model Constitution for Congregations is now available for use by all ELCIC congregations.

Synod Council also covered much material in their sessions. Some of the items discussed were the following:

- A legacy gift has been received from the estate of Bev Boren, a member at Hosanna, Edmonton, with funds to be used for ministry in the North. Council approved the gift of 10% of the funds be forwarded to On Eagles' Wings and asked the Executive Committee to explore the creation of a Fund for Ministry in the North recognizing the ministries which already exist at Trinity Lutheran, Whitehorse and Holy Family Lutheran, Yellowknife, and future ministry opportunities in the North.
- At each retreat, Synod Council has the obligation to review a specified number of policies from our governance manual to ensure that we are in compliance. This was completed at this retreat and we are in compliance with the policies reviewed.
- The 17th Biennial Convention of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories will be held at U of A Augustana Campus in Camrose from July 14-16, 2018 under the theme: *Faith, Hope and Love ... the greatest of these is LOVE* (1 Corinthians 13:13) Our guest speaker for convention is Anna Madsen of OMG Ministries. Elections will be held for Bishop, Synod Council secretary, LTS Board of Governors rostered representative, as well as representatives on Synod Council who have completed their terms. Please note the deadline for convention registration on the Synod website.
- Synod Council unanimously agreed to re-name the Leadership Award to be granted at the Synod Convention Banquet: The Synod of Alberta and the Territories *Stephen D. Wildfang* Leadership Award.
- As part of our Synod's commitment to the TRC and Abiding in Right Relationships, we viewed and discussed the video *Reserve 107*. This is the story of how the Young Chippewyan First Nations Band initiated a gathering with the Lutheran and Mennonite settlers who had unknowingly settled on their reserve land. The video could serve as a model of how groups can come together to address land reconciliation issues.
- Bishop Larry shared a short video clip he had received from the BC Synod thanking the ABT Synod for sharing some of the ABT Synod funds from the Church Extension and Capital Fund with them.
- The Keynote presentation at the Congregational Life event hosted March 17 in Red Deer will be recorded and made available for use.

- A lay representative from the West Central Area Leadership Team shared with Synod Council the progress of their Area Leadership Team. Her comments about their progress included points such as: it's ongoing and it's a process, good communication is needed, relationships need to be developed, visitation must occur, intentional lay involvement is necessary, and the Synod is providing help through the training they are offering.
- Synod Council Councillors spent time reviewing a policy governing their role to the congregations in their areas. We identified some of the ways we currently use to communicate with members and congregations and spent time identifying ideas to increase our communication and connection as Councillors and as a Synod.
- Our Anglican guest on Council, the Venerable Alan Perry shared some of the governance differences between our two church bodies. Alan is embarking on a sabbatical leave and will focus on governance structures in the Anglican church in various countries of the world.
- Synod Council members were reminded of the need to elect delegates at the synod convention for the 2019 national convention. Nominations must be received at the synod office by April 14, 2018. The Delegate Nominee Form and Delegate Biographical Information Form are both available on the synod website: albertasynod.ca